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Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe

Special National Intelligence Estimate

This Special National Intelligence Estimate represents the views of the Director of Central Intelligence with the advice and assistance of the US Intelligence Community.

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Soviet Policy During the Next Phase of Arms Control in Europe

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Figure 1
NATO and Warsaw Pact Forces Within the Atlantic-to-the-Urals Zone

Indigenous Forces		Stationed Forces
Belgium	Netherlands	Belgium
Denmark	Norway	Canada
France	Portugal	France
Greece	Spain	Netherlands
Iceland	Turkey	United Kingdom
Italy	United Kingdom	United States
Luxembourg	West Germany	West Germany

Indigenous Forces		Stationed Forces
Bulgaria	Hungary	Group of Soviet Forces, Germany
Czechoslovakia	Poland	Central Group of Forces (Czechoslovakia)
East Germany	Romania	Northern Group of Forces (Poland)
Soviet Military Districts		Southern Group of Forces (Hungary)
Baltic	North Caucasus	
Belorussian	Odessa	
Carpathian	Transcaucasus	
Kiev	Ural	
Leningrad	Volga	
Moscow		

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Key Judgments

We judge that the Soviets and their allies have a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control:

- Military:
  - — To improve the correlation of forces and to reduce what they perceive as NATO's capability to launch a surprise attack.
  - — To impede NATO's force modernization plans and to prevent or impede NATO's deployment of advanced technology weapons.

- Political:
  - — To demonstrate the "new thinking" in Soviet foreign and domestic policy.
  - — To appeal to foreign and domestic public opinion in a generalized way, while adding to Moscow's overall arms control posture and enhancing the USSR's image as a trustworthy, rational player in the international arena.

- Economic:
  - — To reduce the threat from NATO and thereby reduce the urgency on the part of the Soviet Union to match or better NATO's high-technology modernization programs.
  - — To make it politically easier to allocate economic resources within the Soviet Union from the defense sector to the civilian sector to carry out *perestroyka*.

We believe the Soviets and their allies *prefer* to negotiate with NATO to achieve *mutual* reductions of conventional forces. Militarily, it makes more sense to trade force reductions, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces. However, the Warsaw Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to the Soviets could take years—and might not even be possible.

In the short term (up to two years), we believe the Pact will pursue a strategy aimed at reducing the West's perception of the Soviet threat in the expectation that this course will make it difficult for NATO governments to maintain or increase defense spending. The Pact will engage NATO in the Conventional Stability Talks and probably will introduce sweeping proposals for asymmetric reductions.

We predict that, when formal negotiations concerning conventional forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone begin, the Warsaw Pact will quickly present a formal version of its public diplomacy position—and might even table a draft treaty very early in the negotiations. It will probably insist on an initial discussion of data regarding asymmetries between the two sides' forces and will probably suggest establishing a working group on data.

The Warsaw Pact states will *not* accept the current NATO proposal, which in effect calls on the Pact to take gigantic cuts in tanks and artillery for minor cuts on the NATO side so that there is parity between the Pact and NATO. For example, this would mean the Pact would have to withdraw or destroy about 25,000 tanks while NATO would withdraw or destroy about 900 tanks.

Outside of the negotiating process itself, for political effect, the Soviets may also take unilateral initiatives:

- We judge the Soviets could garner significant political gains in Western Europe at tolerable risks by unilaterally removing some of their forces from Eastern Europe, especially all from Hungary. The evidence on Soviet timing and conditions is insufficient to predict with confidence when and whether a withdrawal announcement might be made.

- Given the West German concern about short-range nuclear-capable forces, it is possible that the Soviets might make a gesture by unilaterally withdrawing some short-range ballistic missile launchers from Eastern Europe; however, we judge the likelihood of such a move to be low for the period of this Estimate.

- The Soviets may attempt to portray force restructuring as a unilateral force reduction; however, we judge that the ongoing restructuring of the Soviet ground forces is intended primarily to make units more effective for prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO.

We judge that, among our NATO Allies, France will be the most resistant to potential Soviet gambits, with the United Kingdom a strong second. Of the major partners, the Federal Republic of Germany will be the most responsive to such ploys, because of its strong desire to reduce defense spending and to reduce the chance of the country becoming Europe's nuclear battleground. The challenge for the United States and the rest of NATO will be to continue the ongoing NATO modernization, while at the same time negotiating on a possible agreement with a more sophisticated adversary in an environment where the public perception of the Warsaw Pact threat has been softened significantly.

~~*These Key Judgments are Secret*~~

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Soviet–Warsaw Pact Conventional Arms Control Proposals

April 1986: Gorbachev proposes at the East German party congress that NATO and the Pact make "substantial" reductions in all components of their ground and "tactical" air forces. Units would be disbanded and weapons either destroyed or stored on national territories. Tactical nuclear weapons would also be reduced. The area of reductions would be all of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Dependable means of verification would be used, including on-site inspections "if need be."

June 1986: The Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee issues the Budapest Appeal that formally "blesses" Gorbachev's proposal. The Pact leaders call for mutual *NATO and Pact reductions of 100,000 to 150,000 military personnel soon and a further cut by the 1990s of another 350,000 to 400,000 personnel. Ground forces and "tactical strike aviation" and tactical nuclear weapons must be reduced. The qualification "if need be" is dropped in discussing on-site inspections, but the Pact's "verification" proposals concern only the reductions of forces.*

April 1987: In Prague, Gorbachev acknowledges there are, "of course," asymmetries in the armed forces of the Pact and NATO and says the USSR favors rectifying inequalities by reductions by the side that has a numerical advantage.

May 1987: Polish leader Jaruzelski proposes a plan calling for a gradual withdrawal/reduction of nuclear delivery systems, especially those with a range under 500 kilometers, a gradual withdrawal/reduction of conventional weapons, an "evolution in the nature of military doctrines" so they would be "exclusively defensive," confidence-and-security-building measures, and mechanisms for strict verification. On the Eastern side, the zone would be East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary; and on the Western side, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Denmark.

May 1987: The Political Consultative Committee repeats virtually verbatim the PCC declaration of 1986 and reiterates that the Pact's military doctrine is defensive and proposes a Pact-NATO discussion of doctrines.

January 1988: Foreign Minister Shevardnadze declares that the Soviets are willing to "compromise" on the issue of dual-capable weapon systems. In Bonn, he says the USSR (and Pact) want to discuss the delivery systems within the context of the conventional forces talks, but would be willing to negotiate on the nuclear warheads for the systems separately.

May 1988: Gorbachev proposes to President Reagan in Moscow that reductions be taken in phases:
- *Identify and eliminate asymmetries.*
- *Make further mutual reductions of up to 500,000 men with their equipment.*
- *Make still further reductions so that NATO and the Pact will have only "defensive" forces.*

July 1988: The Political Consultative Committee issues another statement that endorses Gorbachev's proposal to the President.

August 1988: Soviet Defense Minister Yazov tells the US Secretary of Defense that the Warsaw Pact summit leaders approved a withdrawal of 70,000 Soviet personnel from Eastern Europe in return for an unspecified NATO reduction from the southern region.

Discussion

Introduction

The Warsaw Pact's public diplomacy on conventional arms control has featured a number of public proposals by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, proposals from the Warsaw Pact's summit-level Political Consultative Committee, and hundreds of statements and press articles by lower ranking officials, all of which have stressed the Soviet Union's desire for a conventional arms reduction agreement (see inset).

In public statements, in the negotiations in Vienna, and in diplomatic contacts with the West, Soviet and East European spokesmen have emphasized the Warsaw Pact's willingness to negotiate with NATO large but mutual reductions of conventional ground force units with their equipment and what the Pact terms "tactical strike aviation." [1] Since Gorbachev first raised the possibility in Prague in 1987, Pact spokesmen have also consistently advocated that the Pact *and* NATO first eliminate the "asymmetries" in forces, then negotiate further reductions. Other themes of the Warsaw Pact regarding negotiated reductions include:

- Reductions should be by units.
- Equipment affected should be destroyed or stored on national territory.
- Reductions of forces must be subject to "verification."

In addition to these proposals, of course, the Warsaw Pact states have been negotiating in Vienna with representatives of all 16 NATO states since February 1987 to arrange a mandate for new conventional arms control talks—thus far called Conventional Stability Talks—that will have as a zone of application "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." See inset on page 2 for an outline of the various forums at which arms control has recently been discussed.

[1] The Soviets generally leave the definition of "tactical strike aviation" purposefully vague in public statements, but we believe they mean those light bombers, fighter-bombers, and other ground attack aircraft in units assigned a primary mission of ground attack. Some Soviet military spokesmen have implied that the term "tactical strike aviation" is synonymous with dual-capable aircraft.

Soviet Motives

We judge that the Soviets and their allies have a number of interrelated military, political, and economic reasons to engage the West in conventional arms control. Their primary military objectives are probably: to improve the correlation of forces and to reduce what they perceive as NATO's capability to launch a surprise attack; and to impede NATO's force modernization plans and to prevent or impede NATO's deployment of advanced technology weapons. In the Soviet view, success in achieving these objectives would significantly reduce the threat from NATO and thereby reduce the urgency on the part of the Soviet Union to match or better NATO's high-technology modernization programs. This, in turn, would make it politically easier to allocate economic resources within the Soviet Union from the defense sector to the civilian sector to carry out *perestroyka*. Other related objectives are:

- To reduce NATO's capability for mobilization and reinforcement with particular emphasis on reducing the ability of the West German Bundeswehr to mobilize forces.
- To attain, ultimately, a significant reduction of US forces in Europe, and cast doubts on the US nuclear umbrella.
- To reduce and, ultimately, to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

Military Considerations

The Warsaw Pact has a genuine concern about NATO's military prowess, appraises the military balance differently from the West, and fears NATO's

Other Arms Control Forums

The Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) Negotiations: *The Warsaw Pact states and most NATO states—but not France—have been meeting in Vienna since 1973 to discuss mutual reductions of ground and air forces in a zone that encompasses East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia; and West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The talks have been moribund for years and should end when (or soon after) the Conventional Stability Talks begin.*

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE): *This conference, which includes the United States, Canada, and all European states except Albania (35 in all), originally met in Helsinki and issued the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The conference deals with a wide range of European security, economic, scientific, and humanitarian issues, but is not a disarmament forum because reduction of forces is not a topic. There have been several followup meetings since Helsinki, including the one in Vienna that began in September 1986 and is currently running (as of November 1988). Agreements must be by consensus and are politically but not legally binding.*

The Conference on Confidence-and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE): *The same 35 states met from January 1984 to September 1986 to negotiate the Stockholm Document, a package of confidence-building measures including mandatory advance notification of certain military exercises, mandatory invitation of observers to certain exercises, and provisions for a limited number of on-site challenge inspections. The zone of application is "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals." CDE was held under the auspices of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). A second phase of CDE—termed CDE I-B by the West—will begin at the same time and in the same city as the Conventional Stability Talks.*

Conference on Disarmament (CD): *This conference is sponsored by the United Nations, and 40 UN members participate in meetings that are held alternately in New York and Geneva. It deals with chemical and biological weapons, space issues, and many other issues. The United States and USSR hold bilateral talks on chemical weapons "on the margin" and "under the auspices" of the CD.*

Nuclear and Space Talks (NST): *The "umbrella" under which the United States and USSR negotiated on Intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), and continue to negotiate on strategic nuclear forces (START), and defense and space-related issues (D&S). This conference has met in Geneva since 1985 and is noteworthy, of course, for the successful conclusion of the INF Treaty.*

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ability to continue to produce advanced technology nonnuclear weapons and to mobilize and reinforce military forces. The Soviets are particularly concerned about NATO's aircraft, which they consistently rate as superior to corresponding Soviet aircraft. Soviet planners view the improvements NATO has made in its air forces as threatening their goal of achieving air supremacy—a critical objective—during a conventional war in Europe. In addition, the Soviets have repeatedly expressed concern about NATO's overall naval capability. There is a parallel trend in Soviet assessments to attribute greater effectiveness than NATO does itself to most NATO conventional weapons, especially antitank guided missiles (ATGMs) and attack helicopters.

The Soviets have also frequently discussed the threat posed by Western—especially US—advanced conventional weapons and often claim that these weapons' destructive power approaches that of low yield nuclear weapons. For example, the Soviets refer in particular to "vacuum bombs," and they often discuss the dangers of precision location strike systems. (The US term for a vacuum bomb is a fuel-air explosive weapon.)

The Soviets associate US advanced technology conventional weapon systems with NATO's Follow-on Forces Attack (FOFA) doctrine. They recognize the threat such weapons pose to the Pact's ability to reinforce.

The Soviets have grave concerns about how quickly NATO, especially the West Germans, can mobilize forces and how quickly the United States can send reinforcements to Europe.

The Pact's perception, probably representing a worst-case scenario, of how quickly NATO can mobilize and its perceptions of improved defense capabilities have led the Pact to change its estimate of the size of forces required to ensure Pact success in a conventional war. (The annex elaborates on Soviet perceptions of NATO's military strength.) Thus, it now appears a sustained Warsaw Pact theater offensive operation against NATO in Central Europe would probably involve *four* fronts instead of three fronts in the first strategic echelon.

Economic Considerations

When Gorbachev came to power, he inherited a technologically backward economy that had experienced a decade of slowing growth characterized by industrial bottlenecks, labor and energy shortages, and declining efficiency of investment. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, he initiated a bold strategy of *perestroyka* and industrial modernization designed to deal with many of the economy's fundamental problems. A major part of this strategy has involved an effort to boost productivity through the large-scale replacement of capital stock in civilian industry—a strategy that so far has been unsuccessful. Indeed, despite stepped-up investment in the civilian sector of the economy, the Soviet economic situation over the past three years has failed to improve, as the hoped-for gains in productivity have not materialized.

From the beginning, Gorbachev's efforts to refurbish the country's industrial base have held the potential for heated competition with defense for many of the resources involved in weapons production. Most of the machinery needed for Gorbachev's modernization program is manufactured by the machine-building sector—the industrial sector also responsible for the production of military hardware. Moreover, many of the inputs used in the defense production, such as microelectronics and high-quality machinery, are vital to the modernization program. At least initially, however, the defense sector was insulated from resource cutbacks, and the leadership apparently hoped that it could achieve economic improvements without affecting weapons development and production.

As the economy has continued to stumble, however, the Soviet leadership has stepped up its pressure on the defense industries to provide additional resources for its civilian program. In particular, it has toughened its demands that the defense sector assume greater responsibility for producing civilian goods. For example, during an October 1987 Central Committee conference, Premier Ryzhkov announced that the defense industries must increase deliveries of equipment to the food-processing sector by "four-fold to nine-fold by 1995." A few months later, the Ministry of Machine Building for Light and Food Industry and Household Appliances was disbanded and most of its 260 plants resubordinated to the defense industries. Subsequently, Premier Ryzhkov ordered the defense industries to staff newly acquired civil plants with their best people and to give the production of food-processing equipment a higher priority, warning that anyone who failed to get with the program "is making a big mistake." Although these steps have not had any discernible impact on major weapons programs so far, if the leadership follows through on its demands, it will almost certainly lead to stretching out or curtailment of some future weapons programs.[2]

To buttress the justification for reallocating resources, Gorbachev and other Soviet officials have called for "new thinking" in the formulation of national security policy. They have emphasized three themes:

- *The economic dimension of national security.* Soviet leaders have linked an improved economy to the expansion of the USSR's influence, and they have contended that the challenge posed by the arms race to the USSR's superpower status is as much economic ~~as~~ it is military. They and the military leadership agree that significant improvements in the high-technology sector of the economy are essential to compete with the West in the production of advanced weaponry.

- *The limits of military power.* Gorbachev has tried to promote a concept of "mutual security" that stresses the inability of either side to achieve its security purely through military means and attaches greater weight to political factors.

- *"Reasonable sufficiency."* Some civilian reformers have defined this concept as having the necessary forces to deter aggression and indicated that the Soviets already have sufficient power to do so. The Party Congress in February 1986 endorsed Gorbachev's call to "restrict military power within the bounds of reasonable sufficiency."[3]

The Soviets recognize that they cannot depend on reaching major conventional arms control agreements in the near future. However, we judge that Gorbachev has raised the arms control process to the forefront of the USSR's national security agenda in an effort to reduce both external and internal pressures to spend more on defense—at least until he can reap the productivity gains he hopes to achieve from his industrial modernization program. With the vast majority of Soviet defense spending devoted to the continued modernization of conventional forces, any accommodation with NATO that would allow the Soviets to reduce these expenditures could make additional resources available for the civilian economy. By actively engaging NATO in the arms control process, the Soviet leadership clearly hopes to undercut support in the West for NATO's conventional and tactical nuclear weapons modernization programs. In reducing the threat from NATO, and thereby reducing the urgency to match or better NATO's high-technology programs, the Soviets thereby create an environment that would facilitate cuts in defense spending.

[2] *The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes that the demands Gorbachev is making on the defense sector do not necessarily require reallocations from defense to the civil sector, or that they would "lead to stretching out or curtailment" of weapons programs, especially those that are key to Soviet force modernization. The defense sector could meet these demands with minimal cost in resources and without affecting current or future procurement programs.*

[3] *The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes that Soviet calls for "new thinking" in national security policy are designed to support a variety of political, military, and economic objectives and, thus, do not stem from a need to buttress the justification for reallocating resources. "New thinking" seeks to create a more stable international environment and a more benign image of the USSR, to sow discord among NATO Allies and slow Western force modernization, and to acquire greater access to Western markets, specifically to gain advanced technology.*

Political Considerations

In the broadest sense, the Soviet Union's "disarmament campaign" concerning conventional forces is part of Gorbachev's penchant for sweeping disarmament proposals to demonstrate the "new thinking" in Soviet foreign and domestic policy. The public proposals are intended to appeal to public opinion at home and abroad in a generalized way, while adding credibility to Moscow's overall arms control posture and enhancing its image as a trustworthy and rational player in the international arena.

Initially, the Soviet and Pact proposals on conventional forces were also reactions to criticisms of Gorbachev's sweeping proposal of January 1986 to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Many West Europeans—even spokesmen from leftist political parties—pointed out critically that in a world without nuclear weapons the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces would become relatively more threatening and dangerous. Gorbachev then quickly introduced his proposal for mutual and large cuts in NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, a proposal formally "blessed" by other Pact leaders in Budapest in June 1986. Reporting from 1986, moreover, suggested that the Soviet–Warsaw Pact proposals were—in part—a calculated appeal across the political spectrum in NATO (and neutral countries) to allay fears that a conventional war in Europe would be more likely if the United States and USSR conclude an agreement on strategic arms.

The Pact's willingness to discuss conventional forces reductions is also characteristic of the more sophisticated and flexible approach Moscow has adopted over the past two years. Thus, in sharp contrast to his predecessors, Gorbachev has tried to influence West European governments and public opinion by using carrots more than sticks. For example, while the Soviets have not abandoned ties to leftist opposition parties, they have built bridges to pro-NATO and pro-nuclear conservatives such as British Prime Minister Thatcher and West German Chancellor Kohl and are now working on doing the same with French President Mitterrand. The Soviets also appear to recognize that creating doubts about the US commitment to Western Europe's defense could lead to efforts to strengthen both NATO's European pillar and European ties to the United States. For example, one of Moscow's concerns following the October 1986 US-Soviet summit meeting at Reykjavik was that it could trigger latent West European fears about a Europe decoupled from the US nuclear deterrent—which in turn could spur efforts by NATO to upgrade its conventional and tactical nuclear forces.

This more active, nonconfrontational engagement of Western Europe represents at one level a major tactical shift to obtain long-term Soviet goals in the region. At the same time, Moscow is strongly motivated to see the arms control process produce tangible results. Thus, in the nuclear arms control field, the present Soviet leadership sought and made substantive compromises in its negotiations with the United States to conclude arms agreements. For example, Moscow's acceptance of on-site inspections in the INF Treaty—a key to its acceptability to the United States and NATO—signaled a major reversal of previous Soviet policy on verification procedures that dates back to the 1950s.

In the conventional arms control process, we expect that for the short term (two years) the Pact states will continue their efforts to take advantage of the differences among the Western Allies. The Warsaw Pact, however, will desire that NATO *not* be so divided as to preclude negotiating and perhaps completing a mutually beneficial arms control agreement.

Over the longer term—if there is no progress toward reaching agreement within two years—the Soviets and their allies might adopt a more propagandistic approach designed to cause dissension within NATO and especially to create European suspicion of the United States. Moscow would seek to play on existing West European misgivings about Washington's posture on such issues as SDI, ABM, SALT II, and short-range nuclear-capable forces (SNF) modernization to create the impression among Europeans that the United States is an unreliable, or perhaps even a dangerous, partner.

The major Soviet political consideration behind Soviet conventional arms control initiatives is the reduction of European electoral and political support for

increased defense spending to support NATO's force modernization program. Moscow probably hopes that its conventional arms control campaign, along with other domestic pressures, will slow such modernization, complicate Alliance decisionmaking, and confirm European suspicions that the United States does not properly understand or take fully into account European economic conditions and domestic political interests. [ ] the European publics' perception of a Soviet threat to Western Europe has diminished considerably in recent years [ ] At the same time, European NATO governments have generally been unable to fund substantial increases in defense spending encouraged by the United States.

Finally, Moscow also sees the arms control process as reinforcing its diplomatic efforts to engage the major West European states in political dialogue both bilaterally and multilaterally—and in the process bypassing the United States and thereby developing greater leverage, through US Allies, on US policies toward the Soviet Union. In this respect, the Soviets have already achieved some successes [ ]

Soviet Approaches

Despite the Warsaw Pact's public relations campaign and calls for conventional forces reductions talks to begin as soon as possible, [ ] suggests that the Pact was still thrashing out its position [ ] (see inset). We believe that internal differences within the USSR and some differences between the Soviets and their allies have limited the Soviets' ability to develop a comprehensive conventional arms control negotiating strategy.

The extensive debate going on within the USSR on the question of "reasonable sufficiency" suggests that there are divergent, strongly held views about the future size and rate of modernization of the Soviet armed forces. The lack of consensus may be responsible for the delay in the Soviet decisionmaking process regarding the details of a conventional arms control position—particularly regarding what and how much the USSR should offer to "trade" to obtain Western reductions. The differing arguments being made by Gorbachev's civilian advisers and the military suggest that the subject is being negotiated in the context of setting the parameters for the next five-year plan.[4]

We believe the Soviet military may have some differences with the political leadership over possible tactics to be employed concerning conventional arms control, but the military—especially the top leadership—does *not* oppose arms control *per se*. The military knows that Gorbachev's overall policies are motivated primarily by the desire to help preserve and advance the USSR's power and to improve its position as a global superpower. The military is a strong supporter and potential primary beneficiary of these overall goals.

We believe the military has outlined at least its "bottom line" on arms control—to diminish the standing and reserve capabilities of both US and West German forces, particularly tactical strike aircraft, and to slow NATO modernization. Negotiated agreements that include reciprocal Western obligations are far preferable to unilateral reductions. We believe the political leadership will accede to most of the military's suggestions about the details of arms control, but ultimately the outcome of any debates will be determined by the policy agenda and political power of the party leadership.

[4] *The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes the Soviets have made it clear that "reasonable sufficiency" is a concept that can only be implemented on a mutual basis and over an extended period. He believes that, rather than reflecting strongly held, divergent views on force modernization levels in the next five-year plan (1991-95), discussions of this concept demonstrate Soviet uncertainty over how far it might be taken in the arms control arena. Since the outcome of "reasonable sufficiency" is so uncertain for the Soviets, it is unlikely that it is a factor in the five-year plan currently under development or that it is a reason for delays in developing the Soviet position for the first round of the Conventional Stability Talks.*

The Warsaw Pact Negotiating Position

the Pact was still working on its position as of November 1988:

- *The Pact's negotiating record at the "mandate talks" in Vienna showing the Pact unwilling, until recently, to make any concessions on important issues and reluctant to "give" on minor ones. This record reflects in part "hard-nosed" diplomacy; it could also reflect a Pact desire not to expedite formal negotiations. One reason for the Pact's approach is that the mandate talks are connected to the CSCE follow-on meeting, which deals in part with human rights, and the Soviets have only reluctantly made concessions on human rights issues.*
- *The Pact's call for a data exchange and verification before formal negotiations begin, perhaps, in part, a delaying tactic. Given the record of MBFR, the complexity of exchanging data on forces from the Atlantic to the Urals, and the time required to verify the data, the Pact has called for a process that is almost guaranteed to take a long time and perhaps preempt substantive discussion of reductions proposals.*
- *The Pact's most recent public "call" for conventional arms control. The Warsaw meeting in July 1988 of the Political Consultative Committee rehashed earlier Warsaw Pact proposals without elaboration.*
- *Hungarian statements, including one by Premier and party leader Grosz in late July 1988, noting that conventional arms control is an "extremely complex issue" that has "not been clearly defined so far. . . ."*
- *A plethora of Warsaw Pact meetings in late October, including another meeting of the Special Disarmament Commission.*

There was evidence, however, of academic input to the formulation of an arms control proposal in August 1988, when the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, published a detailed "proposal" in its 1987 yearbook, Disarmament and Security. *While this source does not represent a formal Vienna negotiating position, it builds consistently on the Budapest Appeal with very specific descriptions of cutbacks of "comparable divisions" and tanks, artillery pieces, and aircraft within three distinct zones and in three phases. It includes, in the third, or outer zone, "a certain part" of the territory of the United States, and the naval forces in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.*

Gorbachev, moreover, appears to have a strong consensus in the leadership to maneuver on foreign policy issues and arms control. Although there appear to be some reservations about his policies, he has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to build a consensus to support major foreign policy initiatives, such as the INF agreement and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Over the course of his three years as party leader, support for his foreign policy appears to have increased in the leadership as it has begun to produce results. Gorbachev's ability to set the foreign policy agenda has been strengthened by recent leadership changes that put his allies Shevarnadze and Politburo and Secretariat member Yakovlev in charge of these issues. Most members of the leadership would appear to use their political capital to fight battles on domestic issues—with which most of them are more directly concerned. If Gorbachev is willing to push hard, he could probably win approval for a bold, but well conceived, arms control policy.

The East Europeans present a different set of problems for the Soviet leadership. Although our evidence is very scanty, it seems to suggest that the East Europeans would like to "benefit" from conventional arms control in the sense that they too would either like to reduce their forces or at least not compensate for any Soviet reductions. Regarding Soviet forces, the East Europeans do not have a common position on conventional arms control, and the Soviets therefore must respond to different sets of interests. To provide further aggravation, Romanian leader Ceausescu continues to play his highly idiosyncratic role and threatened to block all progress in Vienna unless his views are accepted. The Soviets and other East Europeans, as a result, occasionally refer to the "Warsaw Pact Six plus one." And finally, the Special Commission on Disarmament established by the Pact apparently has been unable to formulate even a basic policy on which to formulate proposals.

We believe, moreover, that, while the Soviets and their allies appear to have resolved some of the fundamental issues regarding the negotiations, they have yet to agree on many important details of how any reductions on the Pact side should be apportioned. For example, if the Soviets withdraw forces from Eastern Europe, from which countries should the Soviets withdraw and how much of the Groups of Forces should be withdrawn? Again, the evidence is scanty, but we surmise that Hungarian leaders advocate and Polish leaders would support at least partial withdrawals. Czechoslovak leaders are likely divided on the question of a Soviet withdrawal. East German leaders probably would support a partial withdrawal of Soviet forces from East Germany (which now comprise 19 tank and motorized rifle divisions), but would oppose a major withdrawal.

There is no doubt that control over the substance of Pact policy in international negotiations will remain firmly in Soviet hands. The Soviets, however, may find it hard to ignore demands from some of the East Europeans that they participate in a possible reductions scheme. The USSR probably will also pay attention to possible warnings from other East Europeans that stability in their countries could be affected by major Soviet withdrawals. The bottom line, then, is that Moscow may find it more difficult than in the past to manage its alliance, and intra-Warsaw Pact differences may complicate the formulation of Pact positions.

Warsaw Pact Options

Over the long term, we believe the Soviets and their allies *prefer* to negotiate with NATO to achieve *mutual* reductions of conventional forces. Militarily, it makes more sense to trade reductions of forces, thereby retaining a balance in the correlation of forces. However, the Pact probably realizes that negotiating an agreement with NATO that is acceptable to them could take years—and might not even be possible. In the meantime, the Soviets fear that NATO could continue to modernize its forces, which would compel the Soviets either to match that modernization or risk a serious shift in the correlation of forces. Such an arms race would, of course, almost certainly derail Gorbachev's attempts to restore the Soviet economy through a high-investment strategy.

In the short term (two years), we believe the Warsaw Pact will pursue a strategy aimed at reducing the West's perception of the Soviet threat in the expectation that this course will make it difficult for NATO governments to maintain or increase defense spending. The Pact will engage NATO in the Conventional Stability Talks and probably will introduce sweeping proposals for asymmetric reductions, and perhaps take unilateral initiatives designed for political effect, but having limited impact on overall Warsaw Pact military capabilities. By emphasizing the arms control *process* they will attempt to capture the public relations high ground while not allowing NATO to improve those advantages that the Soviets and most Pact allies currently perceive.

Negotiations

We predict that, when formal negotiations concerning conventional forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals zone begin, the Warsaw Pact will quickly present a formal version of its public diplomacy position—and might even table a draft treaty very early in the negotiations. (The Pact did just that in the negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.) It will probably insist on a discussion of data regarding "asymmetries" between the two sides' forces and probably suggest establishing a "working group on data"[

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The Warsaw Pact states will *not* accept the current NATO "proposal," which in effect calls on the Pact to take gigantic cuts in tanks and artillery in return for minor cuts on the NATO side so that there is parity in these weapon systems. (This would mean the Pact would have to withdraw or destroy about 25,000 tanks while NATO would withdraw or destroy about 900 tanks.) They will admit they have a numerical advantage in certain items of equipment, but will not accept at face value the NATO view of the "asymmetries." They will continue to insist that there is an overall "parity" between NATO and Pact forces and that NATO has numerical superiority over the Pact in certain items of equipment.

The Pact realizes that NATO would reject any proposal calling for nearly equal reductions—and that Western publics would most likely support the Western governments' rejection of such a maneuver. The Pact, therefore, may fairly quickly suggest an "asymmetrical" reduction—asymmetrical in that the Pact might propose taking greater reductions than NATO in similar units of account (say, divisions) and/or propose trading greater reductions in one item of equipment for NATO's reducing another item, such as tanks for aircraft. Gorbachev himself has strongly implied in a number of statements, beginning with his April 1987 address in Czechoslovakia, that this would be the Pact's position.

More recently, in what is probably a preview of this type of proposal, senior Soviet officials have claimed the USSR would withdraw a substantial force from Eastern Europe under an agreement with NATO in which NATO also withdrew some forces. Soviet General Chervov recently asserted that Pact leaders have approved plans for a partial Soviet withdrawal from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany as part of an agreement with NATO. Chervov, in effect, was repeating a comment Defense Minister Yazov made to Secretary of Defense Carlucci. Yazov said the Pact had approved a Soviet withdrawal of 70,000 personnel from Central Europe in return for a reciprocal NATO response in southern Europe.

The military impact on the Warsaw Pact if an asymmetrical proposal were accepted and implemented would vary depending on how the Pact implemented it. Variables would include:

- Whether the Soviets took all the reductions or whether one or more East European states also reduced forces.
- Whether the Soviets withdrew forces from Eastern Europe, reduced forces in the USSR, or did some of both.
- Whether withdrawn Soviet forces were simply moved or disbanded.
- Whether equipment were destroyed or stored.

The greatest military impact would occur if the Soviets took all the reductions by withdrawing forces from Central Europe, disbanding the units, and destroying the equipment.

In general, withdrawals/reductions of Soviet forces from the entire Atlantic-to-Urals region on a modest scale—involving fewer than, say, 10 divisions—would not seriously affect long-term Pact military capabilities unless the Pact took the unlikely step of destroying modern equipment. Modest withdrawals, moreover, mean that it would take only a few days longer than now is the case for the Warsaw Pact to mobilize, retrain, and reintroduce forces to the forward area.

The Soviets would view the military impact on NATO of such a negotiated agreement as being dependent on:

- Whether the United States withdrew forces from Europe, and whether the United States withdrew equipment as well, and especially if this withdrawal included tactical nuclear weapons and dual-capable systems.

- The extent to which the Bundeswehr participated in reductions and how the Bundeswehr took cuts—that is, by "thinning out" or by cutting units. (We believe the Soviets are well aware West Germany wants to participate in any NATO reductions for demographic and political reasons and would not permit any deal in which the Bundeswehr "gets off cheap.")

We judge the Soviets and their allies would be willing to make an asymmetrical offer and, upon agreement with NATO, implement it. They presumably assume that the impact on Western force modernization would outweigh what the Pact might view as a short-term military disadvantage in some categories. Were the Pact states to offer to trade "tanks for aircraft," we assume they would defend their proposal by reversing Western arguments about the difficulty of monitoring aircraft reductions and about how aircraft can be moved but quickly reintroduced. They would point out:

- Aircraft have played an integral role in surprise attacks.
- It would be the Pact states that would have to worry about monitoring reductions and about the reintroduction of the aircraft.
- Thus, Western arguments should lead the West to accept such a proposal, which NATO itself once offered.

Unilateral Soviet Withdrawal

Previous Soviet unilateral withdrawals have mostly been for public diplomacy, as in the 1,000 tank–20,000 troop withdrawal by Brezhnev in 1979-80, in which concurrent unit expansions actually resulted in overall *increases* in Soviet forces. But since the Warsaw Pact issued the Budapest Appeal in June 1986, there have been numerous reports and rumors that the Soviets would unilaterally withdraw forces from Eastern Europe. These reports and rumors surfaced during every trip by Gorbachev to an East European capital and several times when there was a US-Soviet summit.

[ ] the Soviets have seriously considered withdrawing some or all of their Southern Group of Forces (SGF) from Hungary. In response to recent articles in the Western media about a possible unilateral Soviet drawdown in Hungary, the Soviets publicly ruled out such a move. Some Soviet officials—especially top military officers—have consistently declared that a unilateral gesture is unacceptable. Moreover, the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee session ended on 16 July without mention of unilateral Soviet withdrawals from Eastern Europe or any other unilateral Warsaw Pact moves.

Nonetheless, [ ] the issue was contemplated and much groundwork was laid, possibly including an agreement in principle between Moscow and Budapest. Moreover, Hungarian officials have indicated publicly that they are continuing to discuss with Moscow the timing of a reduction of Soviet forces. The evidence is mixed as to whether the Soviets would opt to make the reduction unilaterally, but any step contingent on a Western response would differ little from previous Soviet offers and would be difficult for Moscow to portray as a bold new initiative.

If the Soviets decide to reduce their forces in Eastern Europe unilaterally, we judge they would choose a move that would secure maximum political impact in the West without unduly disrupting Soviet military capabilities. They would adopt a withdrawal timetable sufficiently long—perhaps up to two years—to retain some flexibility in the event of changing circumstances and would expect to spread their propaganda gains over the entire period. Unilateral withdrawal of all or a large part of the Southern Group of Forces from Hungary would best satisfy these requirements. Alternative unilateral gestures frequently mentioned by the East since the Warsaw Pact's June 1986 Budapest Appeal—a token withdrawal or a thinning of Soviet forces throughout Eastern Europe—would lack the dramatic appeal of removing all or a large part of the Southern Group of Forces.

Senior Soviet military officers would be likely initially to resist any withdrawal on the grounds that it would reduce their ability to conduct operations against NATO, and to oppose a unilateral step. If, however, the withdrawn units were to be relocated to the USSR and downgraded, the military leadership would be hard pressed to argue against the move because there would be no overall reduction in forces.

The military's principal objection—and one for which they would probably find some support within the political leadership—would be to the unilateral character of the withdrawal. Defense Minister Yazov, Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev, and other senior officers have consistently opposed unilateral reductions. Akhromeyev publicly denied their utility during his recent visit to Washington. These military leaders would probably be joined in their arguments by those Politburo members who in the past have expressed reservations about Gorbachev's approach. They would cite the risk that any unilateral move sets a dangerous military and political precedent. But Gorbachev's two most powerful Politburo critics, Viktor Chebrikov and Yegor Ligachev, apparently suffered a serious setback at the party plenum in October 1988 when their responsibilities were shifted away from the KGB and ideology, respectively, and they were moved to new commissions on legal reform and agriculture. In the near term, therefore, Gorbachev remains in a powerful position to carry through with arms reductions he believes would be prudent. Gorbachev and his supporters would make counterarguments to critics that unilateral reductions have the advantage of not requiring a negotiated timetable or being subject to verification. Some military leaders might also be swayed by the prospect that a unilateral withdrawal could place enough pressure on Western governments to bring about some reductions in NATO forces or to forestall planned NATO modernization.

Eastern Europe: The Risk of Instability. The Soviets would probably anticipate that the most negative potential consequence of a unilateral withdrawal from any East European state would be the possibility for unrest. Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe are not configured or employed as occupation forces and are trained, equipped, and organized to conduct military operations against NATO. However, they help keep popular pressures for change in check by symbolizing Moscow's willingness to use force to maintain Communist regimes in power. A unilateral withdrawal from Hungary, where the Soviet military presence is associated historically with violent repression, might be interpreted by opposition elements and leaders alike as a sign that Moscow intended to delegate more of the responsibility for maintaining order to the local Communist regimes. While encouraging reformers within party leaderships to implement change, the Soviets may be concerned that a withdrawal could encourage demands for changes that go beyond permissible bounds.

Moscow's evaluation of these risks might affect the Soviets' timing for announcing and implementing a withdrawal, but the Soviets probably would calculate that Eastern Europe could be insulated from them if the withdrawal were carefully designed:

- A lengthy withdrawal timetable would give the Soviets an opportunity to limit instability in Eastern Europe. Moscow would gain immediate international credit for withdrawing the SGF, but the actual removal of forces would be gradual and could be adapted to changing events in the region.

- Soviet and East European leaders could agree in advance on measures to blunt the impact of a withdrawal announcement on East European publics and coordinate their responses to possible popular unrest. Their confidence in local security forces should have been enhanced by the 1981 Polish implementation of martial law.

- Reformers and dissidents elsewhere in the Bloc might temper their demands if Grosz successfully contained "inappropriate enthusiasm" in Hungary.

- In the end, the Soviets probably would view the continued presence of their forces elsewhere in Eastern Europe as an effective deterrent to any ferment possibly sparked by a withdrawal from Hungary.

Western Europe: Implications for the NATO Alliance. From the Soviet perspective, the major benefit of unilaterally removing the SGF, for example, would be the positive reaction from West European leaders and publics. At the very least, Moscow would dramatically reinforce its other efforts to portray the Soviet Union as a peaceful superpower. West European leaders would view a unilateral withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary as a victory for the Alliance's strategy of holding out for asymmetrical force reductions, but they would differ on how best to respond publicly and in future conventional arms control negotiations. They would also recognize that Gorbachev had seized the public relations initiative. Some would be likely to fear that such a dramatic Soviet gesture could strengthen calls in the US Congress for a withdrawal of at least some US forces from Europe.

On balance, then, we judge the Soviets could garner significant political gains in Western Europe at tolerable risks by unilaterally removing some of their forces from Eastern Europe, especially all from Hungary. The evidence on Soviet timing and conditions is insufficient to predict with confidence when and whether a withdrawal announcement might be made. Gorbachev might now delay until formal talks begin on reductions of conventional forces or until the new US administration is in place. On the other hand, considerable groundwork apparently has been laid, and Gorbachev, whose timing in making foreign policy gestures has sometimes been startling, might be prepared to unveil the plan sooner.

A Soviet Short-Range Nuclear Force Withdrawal
Given the West Germans' concern about short-range nuclear-capable forces (SNF), it is possible that the Soviets and their allies might make a gesture by unilaterally withdrawing some short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) launchers from Eastern Europe. The actual number probably would be small and might consist, for example, of the withdrawal of one of the two 27-launcher, front-level Scud missile brigades located in East Germany. The offer could involve only a withdrawal of SRBMs, or it might be linked to a more general conventional arms proposal:

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- In the Atlantic-to-the-Urals region, the Pact has fielded over 600 Scud SRBM launchers and about 150 SS-21 SRBM launchers, while NATO has less than 200 total SRBM launchers located in the region. In Eastern Europe alone, the Pact maintains over 300 Scud and over 100 SS-21 launchers.[5]

The Pact's primary objectives in offering a gesture of this type would include:

- To improve Soviet–West German relations.

[5] In addition to the Scud and the SS-21, the Pact maintains over 200 FROG rocket launchers in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals region. Refire missiles/rockets are available for all Pact SRBM and FROG launchers.

- To convince West Germany to resist—or at least delay—any commitment to accept fielding of new SNF weapons, as advocated by the United States and the United Kingdom, tentatively scheduled for the mid-1990s. [ ]

- To support the East German and Czechoslovak desire for a nuclear-free zone along the inner German border.

- To create major dissension within NATO, especially to sow discord between the United States and West Germany and to drive a political wedge between the West Germans and the French.

We judge it unlikely that the Soviets would actually destroy any SRBMs unilaterally; rather, we believe that they probably would restation them in the USSR. From there the weapons would be unable to reach NATO targets in Central Europe. During a crisis, the SRBM launchers could be returned to Eastern Europe. Thus, there would be minimal change in the balance of forces, but the Soviets could argue that they were responding to a NATO—and especially a West German—demand.[6]

The West Germans would welcome any Soviet unilateral reduction of Pact SNF missile systems, particularly if the reductions were substantial (more than 50 percent) and the weapons were destroyed rather than simply withdrawn. Although we judge both substantial reductions and destruction of weapons as unlikely, if they did occur, Bonn probably would oppose deployment of a follow-on to the Lance SRBM. The United Kingdom would be more reserved, with London insisting that the West carefully analyze the East's actions before responding. The United Kingdom would also insist that, in any case, the West must preserve the right to modernize its SNF forces. France would be the most cautious of the larger European Allies, although Paris would take into account the action's impact on the West German domestic scene as it formulated its response. The smaller Allies would, for the most part, react favorably to a unilateral Soviet action on SNF. Most would refrain from commenting, however, until they had an opportunity to discuss the technical aspects of the proposal with the larger Allies.

We believe, however, that a Soviet unilateral SRBM withdrawal would not mean that the Pact was abandoning its position that dual-capable SNF delivery systems (as opposed to warheads or "charges") should be discussed and negotiated within the context of conventional force negotiations. In addition, the Soviets will remain unwilling to negotiate on the basis of the Western definition of SNF—which includes only artillery, FROGs, and SRBMs—at the expense of their definitions of "tactical" and "operational-tactical" nuclear systems that also include aircraft. We judge, moreover, that, even in the event of an SRBM unilateral gesture, the Soviets would remain unwilling to limit any subsequent SNF negotiations solely to a discussion of SRBMs.

Although, from the Soviets' perspective, there undoubtedly are incentives to withdraw unilaterally a portion of their SRBM force from Eastern Europe, we judge the likelihood of such a move to be low for the period of this Estimate. An excellent opportunity for the Soviets to stage such a move appeared with the withdrawal of SS-23 SRBMs from East Germany. The SS-23, which was to replace the Scud until it was banned by the INF Treaty, had been fielded with one Soviet army in East Germany. The October visit to Moscow by Kohl provided an ideal opportunity for Gorbachev to announce that no replacement for the SS-23s would be fielded. The Soviets, however, have notified the United States that ground-based missile systems not covered by INF provisions will occupy the former SS-23 facilities in East Germany beginning in November, and [ ] the unit there is converting back to the Scud. Thus, the

[6] The case of redeployment forward would depend in part on whether the Soviets withdrew only SRBM launch units, or also included their refire missiles and logistic support units.

Soviets apparently have decided to restore the Scud force to the level that existed before the introduction of the SS-23:

- The SRBM's role in conventional strike operations has grown considerably, and it is now regarded by the Soviets as a key ingredient in the success of their conventional fire-support planning against NATO. Because of this, from a Soviet operational perspective, the number of SRBM weapons now stationed in Eastern Europe is insufficient to carry out all assigned tasks in a timely and effective fashion.

- A family of improved conventional munition warheads has been developed, and more are under development, for Soviet SRBM systems to improve their performance in conventional strikes. Coupled with ongoing programs to increase the accuracy of SRBMs, such as the Scud, the Soviets are making a considerable investment in these systems to improve their capabilities in carrying out conventional attack operations.

- Many targets assigned to the SRBM force must be attacked at the outset of hostilities in order to achieve a high probability of success in destroying them. These include highly mobile targets and others that would field-deploy early in any conflict. Thus, the Soviets could not be certain that any SRBM systems withdrawn to the USSR could be brought forward quickly enough to ensure their availability for use at the start of combat.

- SRBMs are viewed by the Soviets as important weapons in offsetting NATO's tactical strike aircraft advantage. They would be employed against NATO airfields and air defense systems, and thus would be crucial in the battle for air supremacy. The air supremacy campaign would be conducted early in a Pact-NATO war, and SRBMs would have to be available immediately to participate in operations. Thus, the Soviets might link any SNF drawndown to a reciprocal NATO reduction in its tactical strike aviation.

Warsaw Pact Ground Forces Restructuring

We believe the Soviets have been considering for several years an alternative organization for their ground forces that, if adopted on a large-scale basis, would change its complexion beyond any reorganizations attempted since World War II. Although no Eastern source has linked a possible force restructuring to an arms control move, such an association could be made as the negotiations proceed. There is not enough information currently available to determine whether the Soviets have made the decision to alter fundamentally the structure of their ground forces. We also have no information on the ultimate design and scope of any intended alterations, or the timing of their implementation. The Soviets may, as they have indicated, continue to experiment with alternative organizational concepts before deciding on a preferred structure. Under any circumstances, we believe that any sizable restructuring plan, once decided on, would proceed gradually and require several years to complete in the forward area. Nevertheless, because there have been increasing indications since the early 1980s that the Soviets are experimenting with new ground force unit organizations, we judge the future restructuring of Soviet ground forces to be a distinct possibility. (For a historical perspective of restructuring, see inset.)

Over the past two years, the Soviets have created combined-arms battalions in motorized rifle regiments by adding one tank company to the existing three motorized rifle companies. This configuration has been detected thus far in two motorized rifle divisions and two tank divisions in the Group of Soviet Forces, Germany (GSFG) and appears to be becoming the standard for Soviet forces in East Germany and perhaps the forward area. The creation of these battalions represents another step in the Soviets' utilization of combined-arms concepts to structure their forces more effectively for conventional combat operations against NATO. We cannot yet confidently assess whether battalion restructuring is carrying the Soviet ground forces toward an expanded division-regiment structure, a division-brigade organization, or is a first step toward the eventual emergence of a corps-brigade formation. In any case, expanded battalions would create substantially larger maneuver units—especially in armor holdings.

Reorganization and Reductions: A Historical Perspective

Although Soviet force structure is constantly being modified in order to assimilate new weapons and respond to the ever-changing demands of the modern battlefield since 1945, these changes have tended to be incremental. The vast size of the Soviet Army also precludes the concurrent implementation of structural changes on a forcewide basis. On two occasions since World War II, however, the Soviets have launched forcewide reorganizations of their ground forces units because of a reassessment of their warfighting doctrine and their corresponding military requirements. Both involved major force reductions.

The first forcewide reorganization occurred immediately following the war when the mobile formations of the Soviet Army—the tank and mechanized corps—were converted to divisions. In making the transition from a wartime to a peacetime footing, the Soviets also demobilized several million men and disbanded numerous units.

The second reorganization occurred in the late 1950s after Khrushchev came to power, and was a result of his belief that the next war would inevitably be nuclear. Khrushchev reorganized and reduced the size of the Soviet ground forces by over 2 million men in an attempt to make them more survivable and capable of offensive exploitation on the nuclear battlefield. The restructured tank and motorized rifle divisions were heavier in armor, but lighter in infantry and artillery, since they were designed to operate on a nuclear battlefield where mobility and radiation protection were judged more important than conventional firepower. Khrushchev said he took the reduction unilaterally because NATO would have tied him "in knots" during negotiations.

Many reliable sources indicate that in the early to mid-1980s, the Soviets concluded that, in a NATO-Pact war, a prolonged conventional phase might precede escalation to general nuclear war and that the use of nuclear weapons might be deterred altogether. Soviet military writings also suggest that units with a more balanced mix of tanks, infantry, and artillery are now required to overcome NATO's increasingly strong antitank defenses.

During the past 20 years, Soviet maneuver divisions have grown into balanced, combined-arms organizations. Also, in 1982, two Soviet divisions were reorganized into larger independent corps with subordinate brigades rather than regiments. This organization—similar in size and function to the mechanized corps of World War II—was unique in having a very high proportion of infantry and artillery to tanks, and for the first time mixed tanks and infantry on a permanent basis at the battalion level. One of these independent corps, however, has now reverted to a division. We are also beginning to observe changes within *maneuver divisions. Since 1986 tank companies have been added to motorized rifle battalions to form similar combined-arms battalions in several divisions.*

The possibility that the Soviets may eventually adopt a corps-brigade structure is supported by ongoing restructuring in the Non–Soviet Warsaw Pact ground forces. In 1987, the Hungarians converted their one tank division and five motorized rifle divisions into three corps. The Bulgarians reportedly will adopt a corps-brigade structure for their ground forces in 1989. Although the Hungarian and Bulgarian corps are organizationally distinct, the changes apparently are both intended to reduce officer personnel and perhaps save other resources. Other than a reduction in headquarters personnel, there does not appear to

have been a decrease in peacetime active duty strength. The wartime manpower authorized strength, however, appears to have been reduced.[7] In any case, neither the Hungarian nor Bulgarian corps would likely serve as a Soviet model.

From an arms control perspective, increasing the armor holdings of motorized rifle and tank divisions—regardless of whether the new formations become expanded divisions or evolve into a corps-brigade structure—raises the possibility that the Soviets could remove one or more tank divisions from the forward area while offsetting any significant reductions in the overall tank inventory.

If the expanded-battalion structure were adopted on a widescale basis, such a reallocation would be necessary unless the Soviets decided on a significant overall net increase in armor holdings opposite NATO. Of the few units that have adopted the expanded battalions, the two motorized rifle divisions appear to have eliminated their independent tank battalions and reallocated their tanks to the motorized rifle battalions.

The possibility cannot be discounted, however, that the Soviets are seriously interested in reducing both the size and the perceived offensive character of their ground forces for long-term economic, political, and security reasons. Restructuring under these circumstances would probably be required to distribute cuts evenly and to create a more efficient force out of remaining manpower and equipment. A shift to a corps-brigade structure with a higher proportion of infantry and artillery but a lower proportion of tanks, for example, could create a more balanced combined-arms force and effectively minimize the resulting loss of combat power that major manpower and tank cuts would invariably entail. A smaller force structure could also allow some reduction in equipment production if the Soviets are satisfied with the current rate of weapons modernization in key regions and can accept decreased amounts of equipment in their inventory.

We judge that the ongoing restructuring of the Soviet ground forces is intended primarily to make units more effective fighting formations in prolonged conventional combat operations against NATO. We further believe that, while the restructuring could result in some unilateral force reductions, depending on the eventual design and scope of the new organization, we doubt the Soviets intend to use these changes primarily as part of a scheme involving a feigned arms reduction move in Eastern Europe. The Soviets realize that a large-scale redistribution of their armor assets within East Germany would be detected and monitored by NATO. Moreover, they almost certainly believe that if the redistribution resulted in little or no reduction in Soviet armor holdings, this would be discovered and reported by NATO. Thus, a scheme involving the removal of tanks from certain divisions in order to augment others, and the subsequent withdrawal of the skeletal remains of the divisions to the Soviet Union, would almost certainly be declared a sham by NATO if the Soviets attempted to claim that an arms reduction had occurred. On the other hand, if the restructuring resulted in an actual decrease in armor holdings opposite NATO, then the Soviets would attempt to extract the maximum propaganda advantages possible from this "unilateral" gesture. While we cannot yet determine how the ongoing restructuring will affect armor holdings opposite NATO, we are confident in our ability to detect whether large-scale shifts in the Soviet armor inventory in East Germany are the result of a reallocation of existing weapons, a reduction in the current equipment inventory, or the introduction of new equipment.

[7] The Hungarians and Bulgarians also may be able to reduce future "opportunity costs" they would have incurred had they attempted to fully equip all units within their old force structures. By reducing the *wartime* requirement for equipment through restructuring, they may no longer have a need to modernize certain units with new equipment.

Constraints on NATO Military Activities

It is clear that the Warsaw Pact will continue its long-term efforts to restrict Western freedom of navigation in international waters and airspace and to impose other constraints—such as limiting the size of exercises and imposing restrictions on where exercises may take place—where the adverse effect on NATO is greater than on the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets and their allies will also again play "declaratory arms control" by suggesting agreements on nuclear- and chemical-weapons-free zones, "no first use" of nuclear weapons, "freezes" on defense spending, and other such measures that are designed particularly to appeal to the NATO publics.

NATO has studied Soviet proposals over the past 10 years. In almost every instance, NATO has concluded that these proposals would benefit the East more than the West. To date, NATO's approach has been to weigh each individual future constraint proposal on its own merits, and we would expect most Allies to respond in the same vein to any constraint that the East might put forward. However, some Allies, notably the West Germans and the Dutch, are more open to constraints as a concept than others. The West Germans, in particular, tend to see greater political advantages resulting from constraints than other Allies. In the military sphere, they see constraints as another potential means for deterring surprise attack. [ ] Thus while a Soviet constraint proposal is likely to make little headway with most Allies, Moscow can expect to receive at least more than a polite hearing from the West Germans.

Some of the proposals that are particularly attractive to the Soviets are those aimed at restricting the operations and deployment of NATO, and particularly US, naval forces. The Soviets have become particularly concerned in recent years by the growing US naval capability, which they see as presenting a serious threat to the Soviet Union in an area in which they are particularly vulnerable. In particular, the Soviets are concerned that:

- During a prolonged period of conventional combat, NATO (primarily US) naval forces could seriously degrade the Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) fleet.
- Western conventional naval forces, especially aircraft carriers and units armed with land attack cruise missiles, could attack Soviet territory, including command-and-control facilities and land-based nuclear forces as well as forces throughout the theater of war.

Although not a substitute for building and modernizing their own naval forces, the Soviets recognize the potential value of naval arms control agreements and limitations on naval activities. Of particular interest to them probably are:

- Improving the survivability of their SSBNs through the establishment of zones in which antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations by the other side would be prohibited.
- Meeting the submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM) threat by prohibiting or limiting the number deployed and restricting the geographic areas in which they would be deployed.
- Complicating the execution of the US Maritime Strategy through agreements that would prohibit peacetime US naval deployments in areas close to Soviet territory or, at the least, inhibit them through restrictions or the creation of a political climate in which such deployments would run counter to the letter or spirit of such an agreement.

In addition to proposed limitations on naval deployments and cutbacks in naval strategic systems, the Soviets also continue to call for actual reductions in the size of the general purpose order of battle of the US and Soviet navies, with particular interest in mutual limitations on the numbers of aircraft carriers.

Since the Soviets normally portray limitations on naval activities as mutually binding, they are superficially attractive to the West European publics that are not familiar enough with the fundamentals of naval strategy to recognize that the effect of these proposals is highly favorable to the Warsaw Pact.

Another option open to the Warsaw Pact is to present a formal proposal to the NATO states to begin negotiations on naval arms control. The Pact has already laid the public diplomacy groundwork for doing so in the communiques issued after several foreign ministers' and summit meetings. We doubt that the NATO Allies would agree to such a negotiation, but such a proposal would cost the Pact nothing, and the Soviets and their allies would gain some public diplomacy advantages even if NATO replied in the negative.

NATO took special pains to exclude naval forces from both MBFR and CDE. The Allies have also agreed that naval forces should not be a subject of negotiation in the upcoming CST or CDE follow-on talks. The NATO partners recognize that Moscow's goal in attempting to constrain naval forces would be to affect the West's ability to launch attacks on the Soviet Union from the sea and to move reinforcements from North America and the United Kingdom to the Continent.

West European Reactions

Despite more than two years of discussion, the NATO Allies as of mid-November 1988 still had not resolved many issues regarding the new negotiations. More recently, in the aftermath of the successful INF negotiations, European leaders have shown greater interest in reducing conventional forces. A significant Soviet gesture, such as a highly visible withdrawal of some forces from Eastern Europe, probably would raise expectations of progress in conventional arms control and could reduce support for costly West European weapon modernization programs.

Implications for the United States

The United States will face a number of major challenges in the conventional arms control arena, the most important of which will be:

- To maintain the unity of the NATO Alliance at a time when the French and West Germans are generally approaching conventional arms control from different angles. Furthermore, the West Germans are fixed on the notion of dealing in some fashion with short-range nuclear forces, whereas current US policy is not to negotiate on these forces.

- To convince Allied governments, parliaments, and publics that NATO is correct in replying negatively to what may appear superficially to be attractive Warsaw Pact offers to reduce forces as part of a negotiation, but which are in reality only beneficial to the Warsaw Pact.

- Conversely, to convince these same bodies to be flexible and react positively should the Pact offer a mutually beneficial scheme for reductions.

Given the large numerical superiority the Warsaw Pact has over NATO in almost every major type of military equipment, the Pact's heretofore effective public diplomacy, and Gorbachev's penchants for surprises, the Soviets and their allies are in a position to offer many "pawns." The Pact's ability to offer unilateral reductions/withdrawals will present a possible fourth major challenge to the United States—to offer convincing arguments to Allies to "pocket" the benefits of such actions by the Pact without feeling obligated to respond in kind.

We judge, however, that certain aspects of NATO's approach to conventional arms negotiations serve to protect long-term US interests. First, although NATO governments are a disputatious lot, they tend to pull together on key issues and are generally committed to keeping US forces in Europe at a politically significant level. Second, conventional arms control is a very complex issue. Any proposal, no matter how inviting, is nearly certain to involve complicated data, interpretation, and verification issues that would take many months of negotiations even for the most eager treaty participants. Considering that the forces of 23 countries are at stake, long debate is sure to ensue. There is a downside to this aspect of a conventional arms treaty: should the Soviets, forced by tough negotiations and economic requisites, eventually table a proposal that ultimately would serve US and NATO interests, it may be nearly as difficult to obtain NATO consent for a good treaty as for a bad one.

The MBFR negotiations were in one sense successful for the West, because the United States and its Allies have been able to increase and modernize forces while at the same time negotiating in good faith and offering reductions. The challenge for NATO will be to continue the ongoing modernization, while at the same time negotiating on a possible agreement with a more sophisticated adversary in an environment where the public perception of the threat has been softened significantly.

Annex

Soviet Perceptions of NATO's Military Strength

The Warsaw Pact has a genuine concern about NATO's military prowess, and its appreciation of the correlation of forces is much different from that of the West. [ ] the Soviets and their allies see certain NATO force trends as cause for pessimism. In particular, the Soviets are greatly concerned about NATO's ability to continue to produce advanced technology nonnuclear weapons and to mobilize and reinforce military forces.

The Soviets are particularly concerned about NATO's aircraft. Evidence over the years shows that, in "scoring" and comparing NATO and Pact aircraft, the Soviets consistently rate NATO, particularly US, aircraft as being much better than corresponding Soviet aircraft. It is apparent in Soviet writings and statements that Soviet planners view the improvements NATO has made in its air forces as threatening their goal of achieving air supremacy during conventional conflict in Europe and thus the viability of their theater operations. [ ]

Thus, the Soviets have consistently called for reductions of what they have termed "tactical strike aviation." Marshal Akhromeyev, Soviet Chief of Staff, told [ ] that the strength of NATO's air forces unsettles his side the most. He referred in particular to the US F-15E and the West European Tornado aircraft as "very dangerous."

The Soviets have also frequently discussed the threat posed by Western—especially US—advanced conventional weapons and often claimed that these weapons' destructive power approaches that of low-yield nuclear weapons. The Soviets refer in particular to the "Assault Breaker," "vacuum bombs," and "cavity munitions," and they often discuss the dangers of precision location strike systems. (The US term for a vacuum bomb is fuel air explosive weapon.)

Other US weapons mentioned as being particularly dangerous include the 240-mm multiple launch rocket system. The Soviets have also discussed electromagnetic guns and low- and medium-power tactical laser weapons. Classified evidence indicates Soviet concerns are neither merely propagandistic nor entirely futuristic: [ ]

There is a parallel trend in Soviet assessments to assume greater effectiveness for most conventional weapons, including especially antitank guided misiles (ATGMs) and attack helicopters. Thus, it is not surprising that when the Soviets publicly comment on NATO–Warsaw Pact force comparisons they frequently claim that NATO has both a quantitative and qualitative advantage over the Pact in ATGMs and attack helicopters. Their views on these weapon systems also help explain why they insist that equipment must be destroyed or withdrawn along with personnel and that reductions must be by units—so as to "capture" all the weapons assigned to an organic unit.

The Soviets also have a grave and exaggerated concern about how quickly NATO, especially the West Germans, can mobilize forces and how quickly the United States can send reinforcements to Europe. In

The Pact's changed (and overestimated) perception of how quickly NATO can mobilize and its perceptions of improved defense capabilities have led the Pact to change its estimate of the size of forces required to ensure Pact success in a conventional war. Thus, it now appears a sustained Warsaw Pact theater strategic operation against NATO in Central Europe would probably involve *four* fronts instead of three fronts in the first strategic echelon.

In the arms control context, this Pact perception of NATO's ability to generate forces helps explain why the Pact persistently calls for equipment to be destroyed or stored on *national* territories and why the Pact calls for reductions by units:

- If the United States (and other Allies) could not preposition equipment in unit sets (POMCUS) in the Central Region, it would take the United States much longer to provide reinforcements.

- The West Germans have consistently stated they could not accept reductions by units because doing so would seriously affect their mobilization plans. This, along with verification procedures, has been a consideration for the Soviets and their allies in consistently calling for unit cuts.

The Soviets and their allies also are concerned that NATO would initiate hostilities and—because NATO forces are still generally smaller in size than those of the Pact—would launch a surprise attack: a NATO blitzkrieg. The Soviets are probably ascribing to NATO the same type of thinking they would adopt were the Pact forces numerically inferior to those of NATO. This helps explain why the Pact (as well as NATO) emphasizes that one of the objectives of conventional arms control should be to prevent a surprise attack and is another reason the Pact emphasizes the need for reductions of "tactical strike aviation."

Both Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have told Pact leaders that it is necessary to adopt measures that would eliminate the danger of a surprise attack.

The statements by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze indicate they have accepted the Soviet military view of the possibility of a NATO surprise attack. In recent years Pact writers have made much of an alleged decision by NATO that the West would attempt to achieve only limited objectives in a European war—not the complete annihilation of non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries and the USSR. By maximizing its short-term correlation of forces through a rapid, stealthy mobilization and launching a limited offensive with limited objectives, NATO might, in the Soviet view, hope to achieve significant political and military objectives without risking its survival.